

Application No. 10/706,947
Amendment dated September 6, 2007
Reply to Office Action dated March 7, 2007

REMARKS

**Reconsideration And Allowance
Are Respectfully Requested.**

Claims 1, 2, 4-18 and 20-26 are currently pending. Claims 8-15 and 20-26 were previously withdrawn based upon an earlier restriction requirement. Claims 1, 4, 16, 18 and 20 have been amended. Claims 3 and 19 have been canceled. No new matter has been added. No new claims have been added. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicant would first like to thank Examiners William Gilbert and Basil Katcheves for the courtesies extended during the interview conducted on May 31, 2007. During the course of this interview, U.S. Patent No. 6,230,385 to Nelson and U.S. Patent No. 3,614,915 to Perry were discussed as they relate to pending independent claims 1 and 16. After discussing the claims and references in substantial detail, it was agreed Applicant would amend claims 1 and 16 in an effort to define around the references.

With regard to the rejections based upon references cited in the outstanding Office Action, claims 1-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,230,328 to Nelson. This rejection is respectfully traversed in view of the preceding amendments.

In particular, claim 1 has been amended so as to define a disengageable connector for interconnecting panels. The connector includes a longitudinally extending connector body having a substantially similar profile along its entire length. The connector body includes a base and a projection extending from the base. The base includes a top surface and a bottom surface. A first footing member extends downwardly from the bottom surface of the base, a second footing

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member extends downwardly from the bottom surface of the base and a third footing member extends downwardly from the bottom surface of the base. In addition, a first protrusion extends vertically from the base adjacent a first edge of the base and a second protrusion extends vertically from the base adjacent a second edge, opposite the first edge, of the base. The first protrusion and the second protrusion are spaced apart from the projection and are located on either side of the projection. The first footing member and the second footing member are respectively positioned beneath the first protrusion and the second protrusion. The third footing member is positioned beneath the projection. Finally, the first footing member, the second footing member and the third footing member are shaped and dimensioned to compress into an underlying foam pad to a predetermined limited extent such that the connector sits upon the underlying foam pad with the top surface of the base lying in substantially the same plane as the upper surface of the underlying foam pad.

In contrast to the claimed invention, Nelson discloses no such structure. In particular, Nelson does not disclose protrusions extending vertically from the base. Rather, Nelson discloses nail slots formed downwardly into the base member of a divider track. In addition, Nelson does not disclose first, second and third footing members as claimed. While Nelson does disclose grooves formed along the base of the divider track for the purpose of securing the divider track to a support surface, Nelson does not disclose first, second and third footers respectively positioned beneath a first protrusion, a second protrusion and a projection member for compressing into an underlying foam pad to a predetermined limited extent such that the connector sits upon the underlying foam

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pad with the top surface of the base lying in substantially the same plane as the upper surface of the underlying foam pad.

With the foregoing in mind, it is our opinion amended claim 1 overcomes Nelson and Applicant respectfully requests the outstanding rejection be withdrawn.

As to those claims dependent upon independent claim 1, they are also believed to overcome Nelson for at least the reasons discussed above. Further, and with reference to amended claim 4, Applicant has defined that the first, second and third footing members are respectively approximately 0.036 inches in depth. This depth allows for compression of the footing members within the foam pad such that the top surface of the base lies in substantially the same plane as the upper surface of the underlying foam pad when the connector is positioned thereupon. Nelson discloses no such structure.

With regard to independent claim 16, this claim stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,614,915 to Perry. This rejection is respectfully traversed in view of the amended claim and the remarks which follow.

In particular, claim 16 has been amended so as to define a disengageable connector for interconnecting panels. The connector includes a longitudinally extending connector body. The connector body includes a base having a longitudinal extent with a first end and a second end. The connector further includes a projection extending vertically from a top surface of the base. A first protrusion extends vertically from the base adjacent a first edge of the base along an entire length of the base and a second protrusion extends vertically from the base adjacent a second edge, opposite the first edge, of the base along the entire length of the base. The projection extends beyond the

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longitudinal extent of the base along at least one end of the base to define an outwardly extending ear.

In contrast to the claimed invention, Perry does not disclose a disengageable connector having the first and second protrusions as claimed which extend along the entire length of the base along opposite edges thereof. As such, it is Applicant's opinion amended claim 16 overcomes the disclosure of Perry and Applicant respectfully requests the outstanding rejection be withdrawn. As to those claims dependent upon independent claim 16, they are also believed to overcome Perry for at least the reasons presented above.

It is believed that this case is in condition for allowance and reconsideration thereof and early issuance is respectfully requested. If it is felt that an interview would expedite prosecution of this application, please do not hesitate to contact applicants' representative at the below number.

Respectfully submitted,



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